

have refused to produce a budget, refused to hold hearings on campaign finance reform, refused to schedule action on kids' health care, and refused to schedule a vote on any of the Democratic education initiatives: how to get kids to school and have working families be able to afford that.

The Republican majority would like to continue to do nothing. So be it. But get out of the way so others can talk about an agenda that helps working families in this country.

THE AMERICAN PEOPLE WANT LOWER TAXES AND LESS INTRUSION FROM WASHINGTON

(Mr. HERGER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HERGER. Mr. Speaker, I have discovered something very upsetting in the information; upsetting, that is, to the media and the elite who want to run our lives. Mr. Speaker, it turns out that the American people do want tax relief. The latest USA Today CNN Gallup poll shows that 70 percent of Americans want a tax cut in any budget agreement this year. Seventy percent. Furthermore, a majority, 52 percent, say tax cuts and deficit reduction can be accomplished at the same time.

Maybe the White House will find a way to spin these facts to mean the opposite of what they say. Maybe they think the American people are just kidding. Maybe they think the American people did not actually mean to elect a Republican Congress that ran on a promise of tax cuts and tax reforms.

On the other hand, maybe they should just accept the truth: The American people support lower taxes, smaller government, and less intrusion from Washington.

URGING COSPONSORSHIP OF H.R. 14, THE CAPITAL GAINS TAX CUT MEASURE

(Mr. DREIER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to inform the House that we now have over 114 cosponsors on the most important family tax cut measure that we could possibly consider. What is that family tax cut measure? It is the bill, H.R. 14, to take the top rate on capital gains from 28 percent to 14 percent.

I call it the most important family tax cut measure, Mr. Speaker, because this will in fact, based on two studies that have been conducted, increase the take-home wages of the average American family by \$1,500.

The argument we have heard in years past is that a capital gains tax rate reduction is nothing but a tax cut for the rich. Nothing could be further from the truth. We need to bring this about. It

not only will increase take-home wages, it will help us in our effort to decrease the deficit and deal with our national debt problem.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues if they have not already joined in the cosponsorship of my measure, which includes my colleague, the gentlewoman from Missouri, KAREN MCCARTHY, the gentleman from Virginia, Mr. MORAN, the gentleman from Florida, and several other people who are involved in this in a bipartisan way, I urge Members to cosponsor it.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF MOTIONS TO SUSPEND THE RULES ON WEDNESDAY, APRIL 9, 1997, OR THURSDAY, APRIL 10, 1997

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 107 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 107

Resolved, That it shall be in order at any time on Wednesday, April 9, 1997, or on Thursday, April 10, 1997, for the Speaker to entertain motions that the House suspend the rules. The Speaker or his designee shall consult with the minority leader or his designee on the designation of any matter for consideration pursuant to this resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GUTKNECHT). The gentleman from California [Mr. DREIER] is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, for purposes of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to my very good friend, the gentlewoman from Fairport, NY [Ms. SLAUGHTER] and pending that, I yield myself such time as I may consume. All time that I am yielding is for debate purposes only.

(Mr. DREIER asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks and to include extraneous material.)

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, this rule makes in order at any time on Wednesday, April 9, 1997, or on Thursday, April 10, 1997, today and tomorrow, for the Speaker to entertain motions that the House suspend the rules. The rule further requires the Speaker or his designee to consult with the minority leader or his designee on the designation of any matter for consideration pursuant to the rule.

Mr. Speaker, as my colleagues are aware, clause 1 of House rule 27 allows the Speaker to entertain motions to suspend the rules on Mondays and Tuesdays. The majority attempted to work with the minority to reach a unanimous-consent agreement to allow suspensions today and tomorrow. However, there was, unfortunately, an objection to that request. Absent a unanimous-consent agreement, a rule is necessary to allow suspensions on these days.

Mr. Speaker, this is a totally non-controversial rule. As many Members

on both sides of the aisle have said over the 1-minute period this morning, they want to see us begin moving ahead with our work. We want to do that. We want to take up these measures that could be considered under suspension of the rules.

Mr. Speaker, this rule itself is non-controversial. It requires consultation with the minority, so I hope very much that we can move as expeditiously as possible to pass this.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge my colleagues to defeat this rule and the previous question. The rule under consideration serves no purpose, other than to allow the majority to require the Members of the body to return to the floor of this House day after day, all week long, to vote on measures which are noncontroversial and undeserving of an entire week's debate, particularly when so many more valuable and worthwhile bills languish unattended.

I can understand why the majority needs this rule, because it is a fig leaf. They are hoping if it passes they will have coverage they need to conceal the utter lack of any legislative agenda so they can drag out the consideration of a few minor bills and make this look like a work week. This rule is downright disrespectful, not just to the time of the honorable Members of the body, but to the voters we represent and their tax dollars.

It costs the taxpayers of this country \$288,000 to bring all of us back to Washington this week, and for what? In the 105th Congress, we have worked less than 4 weeks' work, that is about a week a month, we are 4 months into this session, and that, considering the work week of the average American, is pretty disrespectful to them.

I am only one Member of this body, and a member of the minority at that, but I have a better agenda myself than the leadership of the House does. For example, one of the top priorities of the American people is campaign finance reform. Where is the leadership on this issue? They do not have a bill, but I do.

Last week the Federal Communications Commission voted out a rule that gives the new digital spectrum licenses available to broadcast stations. It has been widely suggested by such leaders as Senators MCCAIN and FEINGOLD, journalists like Walter Cronkite and David Broder, industry leaders like Rupert Murdoch and Barry Diller, and none other than President Clinton, that in exchange for the new spectrum rights the broadcasters should be required to provide free television time to political candidates.

Coincidentally, I have a bill, the Fairness in Political Advertising Act, that would condition station licensing on making available free broadcast time for political advertising.

My bill also includes a requirement that candidates who accept free time must use that time themselves speaking directly into the camera, and I believe it makes them directly accountable for the statements that are made in their campaigns. I hope it will cut down on the negative campaigning that has become the norm.

I challenge any of my colleagues to tell me why my bill continues to languish in the committee while we have no business on the floor and we could be considering legislation. The fundraising scandals currently splashed across the Nation's newspapers have forced campaign finance reform to the top of the political agenda, but we have no action here. It is a shame that we are missing this opportunity to enact worthwhile and viable reform, particularly on such an important and timely issue.

On another front, we are fast approaching the anniversary of the Oklahoma City bombing, but 2 years later domestic terrorism thrives. Criminal bombings have doubled since 1988. We have a duty in Congress to keep explosive materials out of the wrong hands. I have a bill that would do just that. It would require Federal permits for all explosive purchases, mandate a nationwide background check for these permits. It would increase penalties for those who violate the Federal explosive law. We cannot afford not to pass this legislation as we approach this tragic anniversary, but it languishes out there somewhere while we do nothing.

Another pressing issue that Congress should be considering is making sure our laws keep pace with the astounding pace of scientific discovery in genetics. Time and again my constituents tell me they are worried about losing their health insurance. They are particularly worried that new technologies, like genetic testing, will open up new avenues for discrimination in health insurance and enable insurers to determine who is predisposed to a particular disorder and use that information to deny or raise the rates on their health insurance.

I have sponsored legislation that would prevent that being used against the person. It simply prevents the companies from using the information to cancel, deny, refuse to renew, change the premiums, terms or conditions of health insurance. This is so important to people in America now. We are concerned that people do not want to know the information vital to their lives because of the fear they have of losing their health insurance. Indeed, it might even bring a stop to research. If we do not pass legislation to protect Americans against this kind of discrimination, there will be dire consequences.

There are other considerations as well. Our constituents are asking what has gone wrong with our judicial system that allows repeat sexual offenders to revolve in and out of prison. Sexual predators and serial rapists continue to

drift through our communities, circumventing local penal codes that vary widely by State.

Congress has a responsibility to address the issue by passing a bill that would put an end to the cycle of violence. The Sexual Predators Act is a measure I wrote that would do just that. It allows for the Federal prosecution of rapes and serial sexual assaults committed by repeat offenders, requires that repeat offenders automatically be sentenced to life in prison without parole.

I authored this bill to give local law enforcement the option of pursuing Federal prosecution to ensure that these predators, who often cross State lines, remain in jail, since many States have far less punishment available under their own laws. Instead of letting sexual predators out on the street to prey again, tough and certain punishment is required at the national level. No man, woman, or child in America should have to live in fear of a serial rapist or habitual child molester.

Enacting legislation is our business here. I know one of the previous speakers this morning had said better we should all be home having town meetings. But my people in my district, the 28th District of New York, expect me to be down here working for my paycheck. They are aware of the fact that it costs \$288,000 to bring us back to Congress every week because I have told them that. They wonder where in the world the legislation is.

The things that are on their mind are what are we going to do, how are we going to keep our health insurance? What is happening to health care? What about my child? Is it going to have the child care it needs? What are you doing down there to make sure education stays strong?

Mr. Speaker, if the previous question is defeated today, and I hope it is, and I certainly urge my colleagues to vote for its defeat, if it is defeated, I will offer an amendment that would require the House to consider campaign finance reform before Memorial Day recess, May 31, so a final campaign finance reform bill can be sent to President Clinton before July 4. I think that is the least we can do.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, let me first say to my friend, the gentlewoman from New York, that I very much appreciate her enlightening the House on her legislative agenda for the year, and to say there are many very interesting proposals that she offers. Frankly, there are some solutions that I think are worthy of consideration as we move through the committee process.

Let me say, as far as where we are today, I believe that we need to recognize that there are measures that we hope to bring up under suspension of the rules that deal with the veterans of this country. There is a great interest

in a bipartisan way to see us move ahead with the Veterans Employment Opportunities Act of 1997, and the other suspension which we are hoping to bring up today, if we can move ahead with this rule, is the American Samoan Development Act of 1997.

I know committees are working, and they are trying to deal with many of the very important issues that my friend raised. It is my hope we will be able to just as quickly as possible get to those items, as well as campaign finance reform.

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I have introduced my own campaign finance reform bill, which I think is very worthy of consideration. Actually, I have not introduced it yet. I am crafting it now and will be introducing it in the not too distant future. I hope we will be able to consider it. But we should look at a wide range of areas.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. DREIER. I yield to the gentleman from Massachusetts.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding to me.

I do not think anyone on our side wants to denigrate the importance of the veterans bill or the Samoan development bill. My question is, why did we not do them yesterday? We are not objecting to doing those bills, but Monday and Tuesday are the regular suspension days. We hardly worked ourselves into a lather yesterday.

Our question is, given these important bills, why did we not do them on the regular suspension day rather than have to do an extraordinary procedure to take them up today?

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, as my friend knows, we have just returned from the Easter work period, and we usually have a travel day there following.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, yesterday we were voting.

Mr. DREIER. After 5, it was after 5 so the Members could travel on Tuesday. That was the reason that we proceeded with the suspensions.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will continue to yield, we had two debates on substantive issues. We did have one very substantive bill yesterday, but some people in the industry affected complained, the private mortgage insurance bill, so that got pulled lest their feelings be hurt, much less their profits. We were through voting by about 20 after 5. Another two votes would have added 10 minutes.

I understand we had 2 weeks off. Is there some implicit notion that we have to have a decompression chamber, that after 2 weeks off the Members will get the legislative bends if they have to deal with three or four bills in 1 day?

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I do not feel that way. Frankly, everyone cannot handle it quite as well as my friend from Massachusetts.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to gentleman from Glens Falls, NY [Mr. SOLOMON], chairman of the Committee on Rules.

Mr. SOLOMON. Well, as Ronald Reagan used to say, let me just say to my good friend from Claremont, CA, one would think he is the State Department, he is being so diplomatic. Unfortunately, I do not have that kind of attribute myself, so I will be a little more blunt. I really am concerned about people standing up here and talking about campaign finance reform. When I go home and I go to a hockey game and there are 6,000 people in the stands, not once over this winter has anybody mentioned campaign finance reform.

What they did mention is that we ought to be enforcing the laws down there and what are all these illegal contributions that are coming in from the Chinese and from other places. I hear a lot about that.

I also hear a lot about people that are concerned about their jobs, and some of them are former members of the armed services. They are veterans now. They are concerned about a bill we have got on the calendar right here today. It happens to be a heck of a lot more important than campaign finance reform. This bill is H.R. 240. It is the Veterans Employment Opportunities Act of 1997 that we have been trying to get through this House now for a number of years.

While I am talking about that, let me also refer to an article by the gentleman from South Carolina [Mr. FLOYD SPENCE]. It is called the National Security Report, U.S. Defense Budget, Walking the Tightrope Without a Net.

Attached to it is a story that was in the Washington Post on April 9. I do not even know what day that is. I have lost track of the time. But this one says: Military forces are near breaking point, GOP report charges.

Let me tell my colleagues I just got back from a place called Bosnia, and I can say that we have some serious problems in this country today. We have got a problem with maintaining the commissioned officers in our military today. We have a problem in maintaining the noncommissioned officers in this military today because they are afraid there is no more opportunity out there for an honorable career in the military. Why not?

I see the gentleman from Florida [Mr. YOUNG] sitting back there, one of the finest Members of this body. He can stand up here and tell us the same thing, we are letting our military budget go back to what it was back in the 1970's, when we were losing all of our military personnel, because they could not afford to stay in the military because their families were on welfare. Their families were on food stamps. These are the kinds of things we ought to be debating. I will include these articles for the RECORD.

Let me get back to the bill that this rule makes in order. Again, it is the

Veterans Employment Opportunities Act. Mr. Speaker, I am going to tell my colleagues there are some disturbing trends in this country and in this very Government of ours with regard to veterans employment. It is hard for me to believe and impossible to understand, but American veterans are actually discriminated against when it comes to finding jobs in this country but especially in our Government. If my colleagues do not believe it, just go out and ask any number of them like I do at the hockey games I was just referring to.

That is why this bill is so terribly important, in order to impress upon the private sector the importance of hiring our Nation's service men and women. It is critical that we start with this very Federal Government and our own House, that means the employees of this Congress. This bill does that by putting some real teeth to the veterans preference laws already on the books so that when it comes to hiring, promotions and reductions in force, managers and supervisors are going to think twice before they try to get rid of the veterans, the few that we have.

That is because this bill makes failure to comply with veterans preference laws a prohibited personnel practice. These managers will be putting their own jobs at risk. What about our own House and the Congress? Well, this bill finally expands veterans preferences to nonpolitical jobs in the Congress. But not only that, it expands it to the nonpolitical jobs at the White House and to certain jobs in the judiciary branch as well.

More and more so, this Government has been suffering without the invaluable experience and background of American veterans and what they have to offer. This bill will put an end to that by giving our men and women in uniform a fighting chance when it comes to finding a Federal job. Can you imagine that? They do not even have a fighting chance today.

That is necessary because every time a young person enlists in the military, they are doing a service for the country that places them at a disadvantage on the pay scale relative to their peers. For instance, if a young 18-year-old boy or girl enlists in the military, and he goes on to serve 3 or 4 years and then his peer goes to college and serves, and finishes the same 3 or 4 years getting a degree, that young man or woman who served in the military is always 4 years behind on the success scale of opportunity, of the ability to be promoted.

When they leave the military, it is critical that we follow through our guarantees like veterans preferences in order to ensure that we continue to attract the best all-voluntary military in the world. I emphasize all-voluntary military. For the last 15 years or so, we do not have a draft. We depend on an all-voluntary military, attracting young men and women from all across the spectrum to serve in our military.

Take our young men and women in Bosnia whom I just mentioned a few

minutes ago whom I had the privilege of visiting last Thursday and witnessing the very tremendous job that they are doing under very, very difficult circumstances today. They have committed themselves to serving their country overseas, many of them reservists who put their civilian lives on hold. This bill includes my own personal bill, H.R. 665, that makes all of those service men and women in Bosnia eligible for veterans preferences when it comes to finding Government jobs. When they come back out of Bosnia, they are going to be full qualified veterans having served in a combat situation and therefore they get veterans preferences.

Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the good work of the gentleman from Florida [Mr. MICA], the chairman, who will be here in a few minutes in moving this bill to the floor today and urge all the Members to support it. Let us send an overwhelming message to the Senate, the American people and, most importantly, our military personnel that we treasure what they do and we take very seriously the commitments we have made to them when they return from civilian life.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for the time. I include for the RECORD the articles to which I referred:

[From the National Security Report, April 1997]

U.S. DEFENSE BUDGET: WALKING THE TIGHTROPE WITHOUT A NET

The Clinton administration's defense budget request of \$265.3 billion for Fiscal Year (FY) 1998 represents a 2 percent real decrease from current (FY 1997) spending. As such, it continues a 13-year-long trend of real defense spending decline and it marks a 38 percent real reduction in spending from defense budgets in the mid-1980s.

The FY 1998 defense budget request represents 3.1 percent of the nation's gross domestic product, down more than 50 percent from the 1985 level of 6.4 percent. The FY 1998 defense budget request, when measured in constant dollars, represents the smallest defense budget since 1950.

Indeed, cuts from the defense budget have provided a substantial contribution to reductions in the federal deficit in the 1990s. In fact, defense cuts account for the vast majority of deficit reduction to date that is attributable to the discretionary budget. Based on the president's FY 1998 budget, between FY 1990-2000, entitlements and domestic discretionary outlays will increase substantially, while outlays for defense will decrease 32 percent. So the trend continues.

From the standpoint of military capability, the administration's FY 1998 defense budget request perpetuates the mismatch between defense strategy and resources—the widening gap between the forces and budgets required by the national military strategy and the forces actually paid for by the defense budget. In January 1997, the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimated the president's defense budget to be underfunded by approximately \$55 billion over the course of the next five years. However, many independent analyses, including that of the General Accounting Office, assess the shortfall to be much greater.

The FY 1998 defense budget request also reflects the administration's continued pattern of cutting long-term investment funding necessary for the modernization of aging

equipment in order to pay for near-term readiness shortfalls. The FY 1998 procurement request of \$42.6 billion is actually less than current (FY 1997) procurement spending levels and approximately 30 percent below the procurement spending level identified by the Joint Chiefs of Staff as necessary to modernize even the smaller military of the 1990s. Since 1995, the administration has vowed to end the "procurement holiday," but its plan to increase modernization spending is skewed heavily toward the later years of the five-year defense program, with the bulk of the proposed increases projected to occur beyond the end of the President's second term in office.

The inability to field new systems is highlighted by the administration's lack of funding for missile defenses. Six years after the Gulf War, which demonstrated both the strategic and military importance of effective ballistic missile defenses, the administration continues to shortchange spending for such programs, cutting the national missile defense program to protect the American people from the threat of ballistic missile attack by over \$300 million from current (FY 1997) spending levels.

One of the primary reasons modernization spending continues to be reduced and used as a "billpayer" for shortfalls elsewhere in the defense budget is the administration's persistent underestimation of readiness and operational requirements. The FY 1998 defense budget request includes \$2.9 billion less for procurement and \$5.2 billion more for operations and maintenance (O&M) spending than was projected for FY 1998 by the administration just last year. This miscalculation results from the Pentagon's underestimation of its own infrastructure and overhead costs as well as from the continuing high and costly pace of manpower-intensive peacekeeping and humanitarian operations.

The diversion of troops, equipment, and resources from necessary day-to-day training in order to support these ongoing operations means that even those O&M funds being requested are not purchasing the kind of readiness central to the execution of the national military strategy.

Although the administration contends that the post-Cold War defense drawdown—a drawdown that has cut the nation's military by one-third since 1990—is nearly complete, the FY 1998 defense budget request reduces both the Navy and Air Force below the personnel levels mandated by law and below the levels called for by the national military strategy. While military forces are shrinking to dangerously low levels, the pace and duration of contingency operations are increasing. These conflicting trends are hurting military readiness, are eroding quality of life, and are certainly not conducive to maintaining a high quality, all-volunteer force in the long run.

[From the Washington Post, Apr. 9, 1997]
MILITARY FORCES ARE NEAR "BREAKING POINT," GOP REPORT CHARGES
(By Bradley Graham)

Increased demands on a reduced U.S. military to engage in peace operations and other noncombat missions have stretched units to "the breaking point," according to a House Republican report on the condition of American forces to be released today.

While congressional warnings about a growing military readiness problem have sounded for several years, the new study provides the most extensive anecdotal evidence so far about the toll on American forces of frequent post-Cold War deployments, long tours away from home, personnel shortages, and inadequate pay and living conditions.

"Indicators of a long-term systemic readiness problem are far more prevalent today

than they were in 1994," said the report issued by Rep. Floyd Spence (R-S.C.), chairman of the House National Security Committee, after a seven-month study by his staff. "Declining defense budgets, a smaller force structure, fewer personnel and aging equipment, all in the context of an increase in the pace of operations, are stretching U.S. military forces to the breaking point."

Pentagon leaders, citing official readiness indicators, have insisted that U.S. forces remain as prepared for battle as ever.

For several years, the Clinton administration has listed readiness as its top priority in apportioning the defense budget, setting a historical high in operational and maintenance spending per soldier.

Some defense experts have accused Republican legislators of fanning talk of a readiness crisis for political ends—to justify increases in defense spending, forestall more troop reductions and embarrass the Clinton administration. They contend that any strains in the force could be relieved simply by more selective and efficient management of deployments.

But the House report, which was drafted without the participation of committee Democrats, describes a pervasive erosion of operational conditions and combat training. It says the quality of military life is deteriorating "to the point where a growing number of talented and dedicated military personnel and their families are questioning the desirability of a life in uniform." And it says military equipment is aging prematurely due to extended use and reduced maintenance.

The report faults the Pentagon's system for tracking readiness as flawed and incomplete.

The system, which is being revised by Defense Department officials, has focused mostly on whether units possess the required resources and training for wartime missions and includes little provision for measuring such factors as morale or deployment rates.

The official view of how troops are faring, the report asserts, contrasts markedly with what committee staff members found in visits to more than two dozen installations and over 50 units in the United States and Europe.

"Doing more with less may be the military's new motto," says the report, "but it is certainly not a sustainable strategy, nor is it conducive to ensuring the long-term viability of an all-volunteer force."

With the Pentagon in a middle of a major review of U.S. defense needs, the report cautions that any attempt to shrink the force further will "surely exacerbate the readiness problems that are identified in this report."

Since the waning days of the Cold War, American forces have dropped from 2.1 million to 1.45 million service members, while the number of deployments to such places as Bosnia, Haiti and Somalia has risen sharply.

Although only a small percentage of all U.S. military forces is involved in these missions at any given time, the extended duration and frequency of the deployments have magnified their impact.

The combination of lower troop numbers and more numerous deployments has led to shortages particularly of mid-grade, non-commissioned officers, the report says. To cover gaps, service members often are assigned to jobs for which they lack the requisite training and experience, the report adds.

Moreover, deployment times too often exceed the 120-days-per-year maximum set by the services, the report says. To make ends meet, those units that do deploy frequently scavenge parts and people from other units, creating "troughs of unreadiness" in the force that are "deeper and of longer duration" than before, the report adds.

Particularly, troubling, the report says, is an evident drop in the amount and quality of training, caused by funding shortages and reduced opportunities to train because units are on deployment or covering for units that are.

"The widespread belief of trainers interviewed at the services' premier high-intensity training sites—the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, the Marine Corps' Air Ground Combat Center at Twentynine Palms and the Air Force's Air Warfare Center at Nellis Air Force Base—is that units are arriving less prepared than they used to and are not as proficient when they complete their training as in the past," the report states.

Although military retention rates remain relatively high, the report says these official statistics cloud the fact that the "best of the best" are getting out. According to an internal Army survey quoted in the report: "Job satisfaction is down and about two-thirds of leaders say organizations are working longer hours . . . The force is tired and concerned about the uncertainty of the future . . . Morale is low at both the individual and unit level."

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. BONIOR].

Mr. BONIOR. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from New York for yielding me the time.

Once again today Democrats are standing up for campaign finance reform. We will vote in a short while to defeat the previous question on this rule in order to bring up before this body campaign finance reform so we can have it on the floor of the House by Memorial Day. This will be the third vote we are taking on campaign finance reform in this Congress. There was a vote on opening day of the Congress and another on March 13.

I might add that not a single Member from the other side of the aisle has voted for reform yet. But I am hopeful that through this process of raising this issue on the previous question on rules, we will slowly see Members of the other side decide that we need to have a public debate on this most important issue.

Our way of financing political campaigns in this country today is broken. I think the American people know it. Although some have proposed spending even more on campaigns, the American people, I think, just think the opposite. More than 9 out of 10 believe too much money is being spent on political campaigns.

So we need to fix the system and we need to limit the amount of money in these campaigns. We need to stop the negative advertising. We need to get Americans voting again and believing in the system. The vote today is not about a particular bill. There are many different vehicles out there, some of them very good, or a solution. It is about setting up a process to debate campaign finance reform, to make sure it moves beyond the closed room, the back rooms, the locked doors, and out into the open where the American people can understand and learn and participate in one of the great debates that I think we are engaged in this year.

What we are really talking about is reinvigorating the political process. Right now Americans do not think their vote counts. They are sick and tired of what they see, what they see going on, and they feel a powerlessness to do anything about it.

We need to change that. We need to make democracy in this country mean something once again, and we need to give people hope that they can make a difference, that they can be a player, that they can feel that their Government is working for them. There are a lot of good ideas out there, and we are simply asking a chance to debate them.

For 4 months we have done nothing in this Congress. Oh, we have named a few buildings after people. We have commended the Nicaraguans on their election. We have expressed our respect for the Ten Commandments. But we have done nothing to improve the lives of American working families on health care, on education, on jobs. Real campaign finance reform will make a difference. It is another one of the issues that the public wants us to address.

So I urge my colleagues, Mr. Speaker, to vote no on the previous question in order to bring up campaign finance reform to the floor before the Memorial Day recess.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume to simply say that it is very interesting to listen to the hue and cry over campaign finance reform that comes from my friends on the other side of the aisle. I stated that I have a measure that I am going to be introducing in the not too distant future which would actually encourage greater voter participation, an opportunity for them to participate with campaign contributions.

The thing that troubles me, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that we are in a position today where we do not have compliance with existing law, and we as Republicans are very proud to stand up for enforcement of the laws which have been flagrantly violated based on reports that we have had in the media. That is what we as Republicans are doing from this side of the aisle. I hope very much that we will be able to get to the bottom of these tremendous abuses of present campaign finance law.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Connecticut [Ms. DELAURO].

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, let me just say that I intend to support veterans preferences. Four hundred and thirty-five Members of this body, all of the Members who are here today, are going to vote for this bill. That is not the issue. This is a noncontroversial item. It is under a suspension calendar. We will vote without any bit of controversy. Suspensions are usually noncontroversial. They are considered on Mondays and Tuesdays in the House, so

in fact we could have considered this vote yesterday when we adjourned at something like 10 after 5 or 5:15. We could have done this yesterday.

We are going to try to defeat the previous question this morning in an effort to be able to use our time in order to talk about campaign finance reform legislation so that we can vote on what is a pressing issue before the Memorial Day district work period.

It is hard to open a paper these days without reading about the lack of accomplishments of this Congress, in fact the do-nothing Congress. But the worst of it is that the Congress is doing nothing when the issue of campaign finance reform cries out for action and early action at that.

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Yes, let us continue on with the investigations, but what we in fact do know is that the system is broken and that it needs to be fixed. Let us have that discussion.

The 1996 elections broke all records for campaign spending: \$2.7 billion. The Washington Post shows that 8 in 10 Americans agree that money has, quote, too much influence on who wins elections. The amount of money in politics disenchant the American people and tells citizens, ordinary citizens in this country, that their votes are not as important as fundraising dollars.

The record amounts spent in 1996 are a powerful argument for meaningful limits on campaign spending. We need less money in politics, not more. And if we are to achieve limits on campaign spending, we need to act immediately, because every delay takes us closer to the next election.

I doubt the American people want more money spent the way that the Speaker would. Let us have the debate on campaign finance reform, and let us just stop fooling around.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2½ minutes to the gentleman from Georgia [Mr. LEWIS].

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise to call upon my colleagues to defeat the previous question and to bring an amendment to this floor allowing a debate on the important issue of campaign finance reform.

Every person in America realizes the importance and necessity to address our broken system of financing the election, and yet my colleagues on the other side, the Republican majority, are planning no hearings on this issue, no debate on this floor, and no votes to change the way elections are paid for. It is a shame, and it is a disgrace.

There is too much money in the political process. We need to recognize that there is too much money in the political process. Members of Congress are forced to spend too much time chasing campaign funds. Special interests and the wealthy interests have too much influence. These are the problems that need to be addressed.

Mr. Speaker, there is a fundamental difference between Democrats and Re-

publicans on campaign finance. Democrats believe there is too much money in the political process. Republicans believe there is too little. Let us have a debate on the floor of the House of Representatives.

Let the American people decide whether we need more or less money in politics. We should put our votes on the board, let the American people see, rather than bring us back to Washington week after week to vote on do-nothing legislation.

Let us address the real problems confronting our Nation. Let us fix our broken campaign finance laws. Defeat the previous question and let the real and serious debate begin.

Maybe, just maybe, we should adjourn or recess the Congress and go home for the next few days and visit our citizens, the people that sent us here, like I did last week. Why come back here and vote on do-nothing legislation? Now is the time to act. Defeat the previous question.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas [Mr. DOGGETT].

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, at the outset of this Congress I was 1 of more than 100 Members of this House to ask that action occur during the first 100 days of this Congress on the issue of campaign finance reform.

Well, that period will expire next week. And what has happened during those first 100 days on the issue of campaign finance reform? The same thing that has happened on the hopes of reform for more health insurance for children across this country, the same thing that has happened with regard to the aspirations and needs of young people across this country to get access to a college education.

What has happened on campaign finance reform during the first 100 days of this Congress is zero, zip, nada. Not a thing has occurred on that or most of the other important issues that face America today.

Now, my distinguished colleague from California [Mr. DREIER], says they have another approach. When it comes to campaign finance, they do not want to legislate right now, they want to investigate. Well, I agree that some investigations are in order. The only problem with Mr. DREIER's approach is, they want to investigate everybody except this House. They want to look at somebody else's house down the street.

They do not want to look here at the issues of the peddling of campaign finance checks that have occurred on this floor and issues that have arisen in connection with the raising of hundreds of millions of dollars in funding this Congress, of special interest money that dominates the elections in this Congress on both sides of the aisle. No; they want to investigate someone else, get indignant, get upset, make some speeches, but not do a thing about it.

This rule sets priorities, and I would say our veterans, who will have 435

votes in favor of their bill in a few minutes, have as big a stake as anybody else in seeing this system cleaned up.

It is time for this Congress to act. We waited in the last Gingrich Congress 1½ years out of that 2 years before we ever even got a chance to vote on the issue of campaign finance reform. That is why we are going to keep raising this issue day after day, because we cannot wait another 1½ years for action, and at that time it was some convoluted position that even the Republicans could not support. It is time for action and action by voting down this rule.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume to say that it is very interesting to listen to this debate as it proceeds on campaign finance reform. We are actually offering a rule here that would allow us to consider suspensions today and tomorrow to deal with veterans, American Samoa, assisted suicide, and yet the campaign debate here, the debate has proceeded on the issue of campaign finance reform.

Since that has happened, I want to take a moment before I yield to my friend from Texas, the majority whip, to talk about legislation I mentioned during the 1-minute period that I hope we will be able to have considered here. If we could get the President on board on it, it would be very helpful, and, frankly, it is much more important to the people whom I am honored to represent here and others from around the country than campaign finance reform.

It happens to be the single most important family tax cut that we could offer, and that is a reduction of the top rate on capital gains from 28 percent to 14 percent. As of right now, we have 118 cosponsors. Democrats and Republicans have joined, cosponsoring this.

I call it the most important family tax cut because it clearly will increase the take-home wages of working Americans, on average, by \$1,500. Unlike many of the family tax cuts, which are temporary, some of those that the President has proposed, this capital gains tax rate reduction would be permanent, creating that boost for working Americans. I hope very much that we are going to be able to proceed with that measure, which also is critically important to our quest of a balanced budget.

We want to bring about a reduction in the national debt and get us on that glidepath toward a balanced budget. We know that unleashing the 7 to 8 trillion dollars that is locked in today, people who do not want to sell their family farm, their small business, their home or other appreciated asset because of the fact that that capital gains tax rate is so high, that capital would be unleashed, if we could reduce that rate from 28 to 14 percent, and would go a long way toward increasing the flow of revenues to the Treasury, as it has done every single time throughout this century.

Every shred of empirical evidence we have is that it will increase the flow of

revenues to the Treasury, going all the way back to President Warren G. Harding, who, in 1921, under his Treasury Secretary, Andrew Mellon, cut the top rate on capital. The flow of revenues to the Treasury increased.

In 1961, when President Kennedy did it, the same thing happened; and then when Ronald Reagan did it with the Economic Recovery Tax Act of 1981, we saw that increase.

Unfortunately, when we increase the tax on capital, we decrease the flow of revenues to the Treasury. In 1978, when the capital gains tax rate was reduced, we saw, from 1979 to 1987, a 500-percent increase in the flow of revenues to the Treasury from \$9 billion to \$50 billion, and it began to drop after the 1986 Tax Reform Act went in place.

So it seems to me we have a very important issue that I hope we can address here.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Texas [Mr. DELAY], my dear friend.

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time. And he is so right about the real important things that we intend to do in this 105th Congress, rather than play these games that are being played around here.

It is amazing to me, the lack of shame that is expressed on this floor, that the minority party, that used to be the grand majority party for so many years, particularly since the last major campaign finance reform was passed back in the late 1970's, I think 1976 or so, had the majority of this House and the majority of the Senate and yet did not bring any bills down. In fact, if they just passed this bill, they could probably bring their campaign finance reform to the floor under suspension.

Oh, I forgot; they do not have a campaign finance reform bill. They are crying for campaign finance reform to come to the floor, but they do not even have a bill.

What is happening here is something that is really serious, because we want to hold hearings to look into what is serious. We have the potential of having had in the last campaign our national security compromised by foreign money being pushed into this country and trying to manipulate our campaigns, and they are trying to change the subject so that the American people will not focus on what is really happening and what really happened in the campaign last year by this President and by the Democratic National Committee. That is what is going on here.

I just came back from 2 weeks in my district and holding town meetings and meeting with my people. I did not travel anywhere. I worked my district during the district work period, and I had one person ask one question on campaign finance reform.

Now, the American people out there know exactly what is going on here on the floor of the House, and, frankly, they are ashamed as to what is going

on on the floor of this House, trying to cover up what could be potentially a national security problem brought on by breaking the campaign finance laws that were reformed by this majority, by the majority Democrat party back in the 1970's, and trying to cover it up by talking about campaign finance reform here, and they do not even have their own bill.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. DELAY. I am delighted to yield to the distinguished gentleman from California.

Mr. DREIER. I thank my friend.

The gentleman makes a very important point, that being, we are simply calling for compliance with the present law that exists. And those on the other side of the aisle are saying, well, let us change the law, let us reform campaign finances, and that will address this hue and cry that we are hearing out there from the American people; all they want us to do is, the American people want us to comply with the laws that exist today.

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I would also say that they want us to do it before we look at whether laws have actually been broken. And we all know the reason for that; it is strictly politics, to cover up the fact that the national security of this country may have been compromised.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. (Mr. GUTKNECHT). The Chair would remind all Members the matter before the House is House Resolution Number 107.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume to just comment on the majority whip's remarks about campaign finance reform and lack of action on the Democrat majority's part when we were in charge, and remind him that we passed it twice out of the House.

The first time, it was passed again through the Senate, vetoed by a Republican President; the second time, it was filibustered to death in the Senate. And, by the way, I think I did mention, I do have a campaign finance reform bill.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from California [Mr. MILLER].

(Mr. MILLER of California asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, not only will the Republicans not bring campaign finance reform to the floor, but their rhetoric today tells us how far away they are from what is happening in America.

They want to suggest that the existing system is just fine, that it is a transgression simply of the White House that we should only be concerned about. And we should be very concerned about those.